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blankets" for the child. The advantages to the donors were that they had an opportunity of showing their dignity, and it would always be a mark of pride for the child to be able to boast of the way in which she had been "held." 556 608 858

Ceremonial marriage clearly demonstrates two strong Bella Coola characteristics; namely, the desire publicly to enter into financial undertakings to demonstrate the wealth of the contracting party, and the desire to increase the prestige of children by means of this wealth expended indirectly on their behalf.

EXTRA-MARITAL RELATIONS

Although the Bella Coola do not regard marriage primarily as a means of regulating relations between the sexes, yet the connection between the two is sufficiently close to warrant description in this chapter. A man considers intercourse as one of the normal phenomena of life: by marrying he has exclusive rights to his wife, but few moral restraints deter him from anyone else to whom he can gain access without infringing the prerogatives of some other husband. Moreover, sexual intercourse is not regarded solely as a gratification of desires; it has a significance which can be described, not inaptly, as holy. As already explained, two favourite methods of obtaining success in any undertaking are by preserving lengthy continence or by observing ceremonial chastity. If a young unmarried man or widower should wish to make use of this latter means, he is compelled to have relations with a woman to whom he has no just claims. This is universally recognized, nor is there the slightest odium attached to the man. The only essential is that he neither violate another's wife, nor force a young girl against her will. 581 831 837

At the present time there is great laxity in Bella Coola, a condition which makes it difficult to judge the state of affairs in former times. Every effort was made to obtain satisfactory evidence, and the following was verified and re-verified with the older men. [128]

A wife, properly married with full ceremony, was usually 837 839

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837 [834] faithful and cases of rape were either unknown or very rare. The daughters of chiefs, too, were guarded with great care and 622 any effort to seduce one of them would be punished by her 836 father. The parents of a girl used to watch her carefully, and the opportunity for immorality was not great in the days when everyone went to bed at sundown except on the occasion of a ceremonial dance. As one informant described it:

"The daughters of chiefs used to be looked after as if they were in boxes, cherished and guarded by their parents and relatives. No one would dream of molesting them. And a chief's daughter used to be proud and look after herself. Nowadays, girls don't care, and everything has become degraded."

[586] If the daughter of a chief did demean herself, the parents lost interest in her, as one who was spoilt. It was always assumed that a girl of rank was a virgin at marriage, and if it was discovered that she had been living an immoral life, her husband in many cases returned her in disgrace to her parents who, equally shamed, were expected to send back to him the 622 goods he had expended for their daughter. Loss of virtue was 848 judged only from indirect information. If the daughter of a chief was found pregnant before marriage, she was almost ostracized by her family. No ceremonial marriage could be arranged for her, and the child could not be cleansed from the stigma of illegitimacy.

836 On the other hand, it appears certain that there was a good 567 deal of intercourse in the old days between chiefs and slave women, or even between slaves and the daughters of chiefs. [431] In the latter case the woman was often cast aside by her relatives though they sometimes yielded to the inevitable and tried to wash away the disgrace with gifts. At the same time, public opinion was unfavourable to a man who consorted with many women, or to a woman who allowed herself to be at the disposal of many men. Any regular union of masters with their slave women for the deliberate purpose of having children was unknown. A girl's consent was always necessary, given either personally or through an intermediary. Even a chief hesitated

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to force his attentions on a slave woman if she objected, although her refusal would be most unusual on account of his prestige. There were no professional prostitutes; a man usually gave a small present to a girl from whom he had received favours, and she was expected to give him a little, dainty basket filled with undyed cedar-bark to use as a sponge. Such relations appear always to have been of common occurrence. Today, as formerly, a man's morality is considered to be his own affair; laxity may lower his prestige, but no law is broken, and his neighbours laugh and chaff him about it. In fact, sexual matters are discussed with the greatest freedom, and a person who has been caught is mocked mercilessly. When visiting a foreign tribe, a man sometimes lives with a woman and, on parting, composes and sings a song describing her charms. One man did this after living with a Kitlobe woman, and on his return to Bella Coola found that some of his fellows had learnt it in some unexplained manner; they used to sing it to him, much to their amusement, in part to his own, and somewhat to the annoyance of his wife. This perhaps illustrates rather clearly the attitude of the Bella Coola to an infraction of morality—where no marriage rite has been broken; it is amusing rather than disgusting. There are no times when the moral code ceases to function. At potlatches, and also at *kusiut* dances, there appears always to have been a certain amount of laxity, although this was strictly prohibited within the house where the ceremony was taking place. Such behaviour is due to the excitement and stimulus of a large gathering, not to anything connected with the rites themselves.

Perverted sexual desires, like other matters connected with the relations of the sexes, are regarded as concerning the individual alone. Sodomy appears to be unknown. Intercourse by pre-adolescents is held to be disgusting, but carries with it no social ostracism. Incestuous union, however, is mildly anti-social; it exposes the offender to secret contempt, but does not interfere with his attainment of whatever position his wealth

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764 while the relatives are preparing the body for disposal. For a child, these services are performed by the parents; for a married man whose parents are dead, by his brothers and other kindred; for a married woman, by her husband or the members of her own family. If she has borne no children, it is customary for her relatives to carry out the funeral rites, especially if she has been many times rebought from her husband. If such repayment has not been made, it is considered correct for a husband to bury his wife, although it is a point of honour for her relatives to reimburse him later for his expenditure. On the other hand, when children have been born and financial assistance mutually given and received several times, it is proper for the husband to perform the funeral rites, although he may receive assistance from his wife's kinsmen. There is no rigid ruling on the point, but bickerings seldom occur in connection with disposal of the dead. Members of the ancestral family are ready to assist in every case, both on account [614] [556] of the disgrace that would follow a niggardly funeral, and also as a means of displaying their wealth.

The first essential is to wash the body, a rite performed by men for a man, by women for a woman. It is immaterial who does this though some of the relatives usually volunteer. Neither husband nor wife touches a dead consort, though it [839] is said that long ago a man would hold intercourse with a deceased wife to indicate his excessive grief. The most influential member of the immediate family takes the lead in the various necessary acts, although there is always endless discussion and advice from members of the ancestral family and others interested. A nose-ring is placed in the septum [301] [975] of the corpse; if this is omitted, the body will not be able to dissolve into its elements but will range the earth as a walking phantom, causing injury to anyone who observes it. [825] If the deceased has just eaten some of the first run of spring salmon or olachen, a shaman washes out his mouth with a sponge of undyed cedar-bark which he throws into the river. The essence of the salmon is thus extracted from the body; if